

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-13

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P R 041535Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1639

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BRASILIA 804

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR BR XF

SUBJECT: VISIT OF LEBANESE FOREIGN MINISTER NAFFAH--

STATEMENT OF BRAZILIAN FOREIGN MINISTER GIBSON BARBOZA

REF: BRASILIA 756

SUMMARY: IN ADDRESS AT OFFICIAL LUNCHEON FOR NAFFAH, FOREIGN MINISTER GIBSON PRAISED SC RES. 242 AS REPRESENTING BEST HOPE FOR PEACE IN MIDDLE EAST, BUT DECLARED THAT BRAZIL'S OWN SENTIMENTS BEST REPRESENTED BY EARLIER LATIN AMERICAN DRAFT RESOLUTION. TOGETHER WITH FOREIGN MINISTER NAFFAH'S CLAIM THAT THE WORD "EQUIDISTANT" DID NOT ENTER INTO HIS CONVERSATIONS WITH GIBSON AND PRESIDENT MEDICI, THIS IS BEING READ LOCALLY AS SIGNALLING A SHIFT IN BRAZIL'S MIDDLE EAST POLICY TO A STANCE MORE FAVORABLE TO THE ARAB POINT OF VIEW. END SUMMARY.

1. AT LUNCHEON FOR LEBANESE FOREIGN MINISTER NAFFAH ON JANUARY 31, BRAZILIAN FOREIGN MINISTER GIBSON BARBOZA REPORTEDLY SURPRISED HIS AUDIENCE BY USING WELCOMING ADDRESS AS VEHICLE FOR EXPOSITION OF BRAZILIAN MIDDLE CONFIDENTIAL

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EAST POLICY. AFTER ALLUDING TO CONTRIBUTIONS OF ARAB

IMMIGRANTS TO BRAZILIAN SOCIETY, GIBSON AFFIRMED BRAZIL'S "STRONG INTEREST IN DEVELOPING INCREASINGLY INTIMATE TIES WITH THE ARAB COUNTRIES," AND NOTED, IN THIS REGARD, THE RECENT OPENINGS OF BRAZILIAN EMBASSIES IN SAUDI ARABIA, KUWAIT, IRAQ, AND LIBYA. FOR THESE REASONS, HE CONTINUED, BRAZIL COULD NOT REMAIN ALOOF FROM MIDDLE EASTERN EVENTS, BUT HAD TO COOPERATE WITHIN THE LIMITATIONS IMPOSED ON IT BY ITS UNDERDEVELOPMENT IN THE SEARCH FOR A JUST AND LASTING SOLUTION TO THE CRISIS. AN EXAMPLE OF THIS COOPERATION, HE SAID, WAS BRAZIL'S EFFORT IN CO-SPONSORING A LATIN AMERICAN DRAFT RESOLUTION IN THE 1967 SPECIAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UN. THAT DRAFT RESOLUTION, HE CONTINUED, ""STILL REPRESENTS OUR THOUGHT ON THE SUBJECT." WHEN THAT DRAFT RESOLUTION FAILED TO GAIN SUFFICIENT SUPPORT, GIBSON SAID, BRAZIL GAVE HER FIRM BACKING TO SC RESOLUTION 242, "UNTIL TODAY THE MOST SUCCESSFUL ATTEMPT AT CONCILIATION, BECAUSE IT CONTAINS ALL THE INDISPENSABLE ELEMENTS TO RESOLVE THIS GREAT PROBLEM; ITS IMPLEMENTATION MUST NOT BE DELAYED."

2. GIBSON DECRIED THE USE OF FORCE FOR SETTLEMENT OF INTERNATIONAL QUESTIONS, AND DECLARED THAT THE OBTENTION OF TERRITORIES BY FORCE COULD NOT BE RECOGNIZED. HE CONTINUED, "WE HAVE ALSO CONSISTENTLY PROCLAIMED THE NECESSITY FOR A JUST AND COMPLETE SOLUTION TO THE AGONIZING AND INHUMAN PROBLEM OF THE REFUGEES AND FOR FULL RECOGNITION OF THE SOVEREIGNTY AND POLITICAL INDEPENDENCE OF ALL THE STATES IN THE REGION; AND, AS A PREDOMINANTLY CHRISTIAN NATION, BUT ONE WHICH RECOGNIZES AND PRACTICES, WITHOUT RESERVATION, FREEDOM OF RELIGION, OUR BELIEF IS THAT JERUSALEM, THE HOLY PLACE OF THREE RELIGIONS THAT ENCOMPASS HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS OF HUMAN BEINGS, MUST BE THE OBJECT OF A SOLUTION WHICH TAKES FULLY INTO ACCOUNT ITS HIGH SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE. THESE ARE SOME OF THE LINES OF OUR TRADITIONAL FOREIGN POLICY, A POLICY THAT BRAZIL CHOSE AND FOLLOWS IN A COHERENT MANNER." IN CLOSING, GIBSON OBSERVED THAT THE "TERRIBLE IMPASSE" APPEARS TO BE FINALLY ON THE ROAD TO SOLUTION.

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3. FOREIGN MINISTER NAFFAH HELD PRESS CONFERENCE FOLLOWING HIS MEETING WITH PRESIDENT MEDICI ON EVENING FEBRUARY 1. HE JUSTIFIED ARAB USE OF THE OIL WEAPON TO "AWAKEN THE CONSCIENCE OF THE WORLD, BUT STATED THAT ARABS NOW WISHED TO LOWER THE PRICE OF OIL, WHICH "HAS REACHED ILLOGICAL LEVELS." HE TURNED AWAY QUESTIONS CONCERNING A POSSIBLE CHANGE IN BRAZIL'S MIDDLE EAST POLICY, BUT NOTED THAT, DURING HIS CONVERSATIONS WITH

FOREIGN MINISTER GIBSON AND PRESIDENT MEDICI, HE DID NOT HEAR THE WORD "EQUIDISTANT" USED. FOREIGN MINISTER NAFFAH CONFINED HIS OTHER COMMENTS TO AN EXPOSITION OF THE ARAB VIEWPOINT ON SOLUTION OF THE MIDDLE EAST CRISIS.

4. ONE REASON PUT FORWARD BY LOCAL OBSERVERS FOR FOREIGN MINISTER GIBSON'S TAKING THE INITIATIVE IN PROCLAIMING THE ELEMENTS OF BRAZIL'S MIDDLE EAST POLICY IS THAT HE WISHED TO AVOID THE CIRCUMSTANCES THAT SURROUNDED THE RECENT VISIT OF NIGERIAN FOREIGN MINISTER ARIKPO, WHEN THE ISSUANCE OF A JOINT COMMUNIQUE WHICH REPRESENTED A FURTHER DEFINITION OF BRAZIL'S AFRICAN POLICY GAVE THE IMPRESSION OF HAVING BEEN DONE AS A RESULT OF PRESSURE ON THE PART OF ARIKPO. GIBSON FINESSED THIS PROBLEM NICELY IN HIS ADDRESS, BY TELLING FOREIGN MINISTER NAFFAH WHAT HE WANTED TO HEAR, AND JUSTIFYING THIS AS BEING TRADITIONAL BRAZILIAN FOREIGN POLICY. WHILE PRAISING SC RESOLUTION 242 AS REPRESENTING "THE MOST SUCCESSFUL ATTEMPT AT CONCILIATION" HE REVEALED THAT "OUR THOUGHT ON THE SUBJECT" WAS STILL BEST REPRESENTED BY THE LATIN AMERICAN DRAFT RESOLUTION, WHICH, IF OUR SOURCES ARE CORRECT, INCLUDED A CALL FOR TOTAL WITHDRAWAL OF ISRAELI FORCES FROM ALL OCCUPIED TERRITORY, AND WOULD HAVE ESTABLISHED AN INTERNATIONALIZED ADMINISTRATION OF JERUSALEM. TOGETHER WITH FOREIGN MINISTER NAFFAH'S INSISTENCE ON THE NON-USE IN HIS CONVERSATIONS WITH GIBSON AND MEDICI OF THE WORD "EQUIDISTANT," WHICH GIBSON HAS CONSISTENTLY USED TO DESCRIBE BRAZIL'S MIDDLE EAST POLICY, THE GIBSON STATEMENT IS BEING READ IN THE BRAZILIAN MEDIA AS REPRESENTING A CHANGE IN BRAZILIAN POLICY. FOREIGN MINISTRY SOURCES DECLARE THAT THIS IS NOT THE CASE, AND THAT GIBSON'S STATEMENT SHOULD BE READ AS A "GESTURE" TOWARD THE ARABS. OUR OWN READING IS THAT THE IMPERATIVE OF FINDING ASSURED SOURCES

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OF PETROLEUM TO MAINTAIN ITS ECONOMIC GROWTH HAS INDEED BROUGHT A CERTAIN MALLEABILITY TO BRAZIL'S MIDDLE EAST POLICY.

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